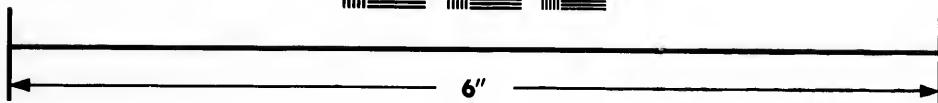
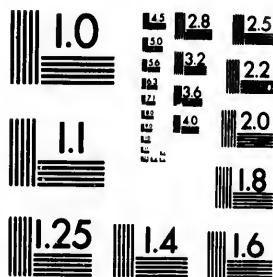


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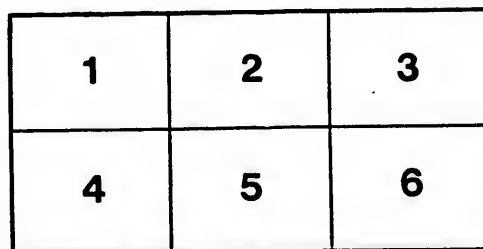
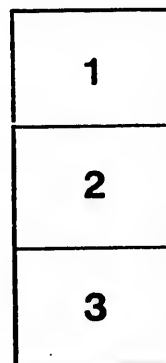
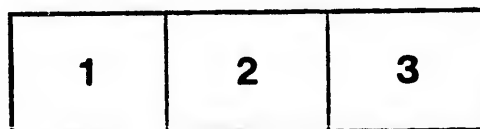
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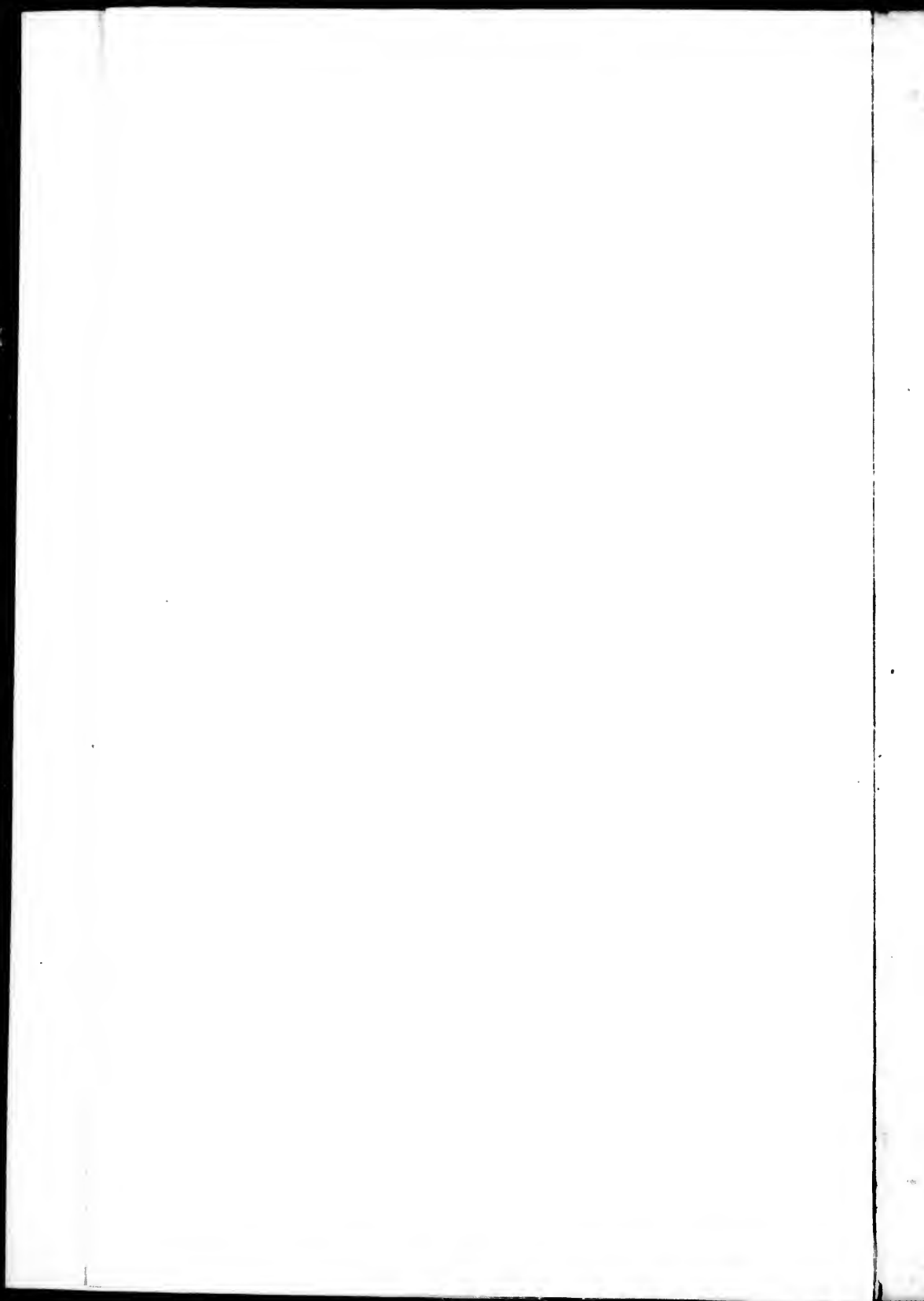
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REPORT
OF THE
Superintendent of Schools,
FOR THE
BROOK DISTRICT,
PRESENTED TO THE
DISTRICT COUNCIL,
NOVEMBER 7TH, 1848.

WOODSTOCK,

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE OXFORD STAR.

HAY & EGAN, Printers.

1848.

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Nov. 3/58

TO THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
OF THE
BROCK DISTRICT.

The Superintendent of Common Schools for the
said District begs leave respectfully to submit the
following Report :—

HAVING, since your last Session, visited all the Schools in operation in the District, with two or three exceptions ; and having enjoyed considerable facilities for acquiring information respecting the working of our present School System, by intercourse and conversation with a large number of Teachers, Trustees, and other intelligent and well informed persons who take an interest in the subject of common school education ; I beg to submit to your honorable body the result of my observations, as follows:

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS VISITED.

I have prepared an abstract from my minute book, for the information of the Council, representing the state of the Schools visited, so far as I was able to obtain correct information. This is contained in the accompanying document marked A.*

From this abstract it will be seen that the whole number of schools visited was eighty : That the number of male, and female Teachers was exactly equal, being 40 of each : That of these 80 schools, nine were of the first class, twenty-eight of the second, and forty-three of the third : That the highest salary paid to any Teacher was one hundred pounds per annum : The highest salary paid to any Female Teacher was forty pounds per annum : That the average of all the salaries paid to Males was fifty-five pounds twelve shillings and three pence three farthings, and the average of the salaries paid to Females was twenty-eight pounds four shillings and five pence farthing, making a general average, including the salaries paid to Males and Females, of forty-one pounds eighteen shillings and four pence half-penny.

With respect to the salaries paid to our Teachers as shown in this statement, when viewed as a whole, there is no just ground for complaint. The amount paid is fully equal, in my opinion, to the value of the services rendered. A number of the Female teachers, were, in so far as I could discover, in no respect superior to many of their sex who are employed

* This document was published in the OXFORD STAR, of the 6th October, 1862 from which it was copied into the JOURNAL OF EDUCATION for that month.

as spinsters or household servants. And so likewise some of the Males did not appear to me to be at all in advance of many laborers or farm servants, either in respect to learning or to general refinement of feeling. Yet, though I can see no reason for such a distinction, most of them were receiving wages considerably in advance of those paid to persons in such occupations.

But with respect to the better qualified class of teachers both male and female, it is for the most part, far otherwise. They are very generally under paid ; and in some instances not half paid. There are some among our Teachers, who in regard to learning, to true refinement of feeling and to high moral bearing would compare favorably with many who are successfully engaged in the most honorable professions. These it must be confessed, do not derive from their vocations the same amount of emolument which the other professions offer.

This evil I fear will admit of no remedy till our Trustees and the great body of the people shall learn to set its true value upon real talent. But it gives me pleasure to have it in my power to add, that from my late intercourse with the School Sections I am led to adopt the opinion that a rapid improvement is taking place in the public feeling on this subject, and that in each succeeding year the demand for well trained and highly qualified Teachers will increase more and more.

There are some other points on which, I am aware, information would be considered interesting and important to the Council, besides those embraced in the document referred to ; such as the number of the children in attendance at the schools, the number engaged in the different branches of study &c. &c. But owing to the very defective manner in which many of the schools were conducted and the utter absence of weekly and daily registers in some of them, I have not been able to collect details on these and other kindred subjects, sufficient to give any satisfactory view of the aggregate state of instruction in the District. But as I have not failed to impress upon the Trustees and teachers concerned, the necessity of keeping clear and correct accounts of the schools, I trust that my future visits will discover a more satisfactory state of things in these respects.

SCHOOL HOUSES AND FURNITURE.

I have thought it important to call the attention of the Council to the nature of the mechanical arrangements made for the accommodation of our Common schools.

Most of the school houses now in existence in the District were erected by the voluntary act of the people before any provision was made by law for that purpose. Very complete structures could not, under the circumstances be expected, as in almost every instance the whole burden fell upon a few enterprising individuals ; and they, in general, not the most able, from their circumstances, to contribute largely to a public object.

A considerable number, however, has been erected under the authority of the District Council, and paid for by a tax levied upon the rateable property of the School sections respectively. I am sorry to say that amongst these, there are only a few, that are in any considerable degree adapted to the purposes for which they are intended. Most of them, either from their

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form or from the manner in which they are furnished, operate injuriously upon the health, or morals or the intellectual progress of the children who attend them. I beg to submit to the Council, *seriatim*, some of the more objectionable features in the forms and furniture of most of the school houses in the District.

1st.—The rooms in general are too low. Any person at all acquainted with the laws of animal life will immediately decide that a room in which it is intended that a large number of human beings shall frequently congregate and remain for hours together, should be at least twelve feet high: Fourteen or even sixteen would be better still; but less than twelve, few would admit would be either proper or safe.

But so far is this from being the case with our School Houses, that not more than half a dozen exceed nine feet; a great majority are under eight and a half; many are only seven and a half, and some are even less than seven.

2nd.—Another evil, not less frequent than the one just mentioned, is the total absence in most instances, of any means of thorough ventilation. The great object which seems to have been kept in view in the erection of our best class of School houses, was the exclusion of the air from without, in order that the greatest amount of heat might be produced and maintained, with the least amount of fuel. Hence in winter, when the door and windows are shut, such a room may be regarded as almost hermetically sealed. Now when it is remembered that each individual consumes (*i. e.* renders unfit for the purposes of further respiration,) about 200† cubic inches of air every minute,—that a much larger quantity is deprived of its oxygen by coming in contact with the heated surfaces of the stove; and that a very much larger quantity still, of pure air is taken up by the stove to support the combustion of the fuel, it will be easily seen that our school houses in general are exactly adapted to the production of early and fatal diseases.

3rd.—I am sorry to say that although in most instances our School Houses are erected in the most public and exposed situations, generally in the thickest part of the settlement, frequently at the crossings of public roads, often nearly adjoining Meeting Houses, country Taverns or Stores, yet only in a very few instances are they furnished with water closets or privies of any kind. Many of them have no sort of enclosure around them, and not a few are placed in the angle of a field, an orchard or a garden, into which the children are forbidden to trespass, so that no open or common ground remains in their neighborhood, except the public highway.

Now I need not remind Your honorable body, that unless we make some effort to cultivate a proper delicacy of feeling in our children,—at least, furnish them with the means of observing the common decencies of life, when numbers of both sexes are thrown together, we can scarcely expect any other result than that in riper years their minds will be brutalized and their moral sense impaired.

4th.—I feel it necessary also to bring under the notice of the Council the awkward and improper manner in which many School Houses are furnished. The lowest seats in some of them, though intended for infants of from five to six years old, are considerably higher, than the experience

† See note A.—Appendix.

of ages has decided proper for the comfort of adult persons. Many are without backs. The writing Desks are liable to similar objections. Children are obliged to sit in uneasy, inelegant and unnatural positions, inducing fatigue and a sense of weariness, rendering mental effort almost impossible, and what is still worse, exposing them to attacks of diseases of the chest, spinal contortions and other physical evils.†

5th.—The last particular evil I shall mention here relates to the frail and unsubstantial manner in which some of these buildings are constructed. Persons of experience and skill in the art of building are seldom consulted. The Trustees relying upon their own judgment, aim chiefly at erecting such a fabric as may answer their present purpose, at the least possible expense. The consequence frequently is, that the money so expended is nearly lost to the Country; as the buildings are such as can never be comfortable; but after entailing continued expenses for necessary repairs, in a few years nothing will remain but a heap of ruins.

As an illustration of these remarks I may mention a single circumstance in connection with one such school house which I examined in Dereham. The building not being quite completed, I discovered that the spaces between the studding were no less than three-feet wide, making it certain that within two years, the walls, both the plastering within, and the boarding without, will be in a state of dilapidation, and no expense or care will be sufficient to keep such a house in a good and comfortable state of repair. Yet the house I allude to was built, if I mistake not, under the authority of the Council, and paid for, or to be paid for, by a tax upon the common property of the section.

These are evils, it will be admitted, that require a remedy; and the subject is one of so much importance as to justify and demand the most serious consideration of your honorable Council.

I beg leave, therefore, most respectfully, to recommend that in future no petition praying for an assessment to be levied upon any school section for a sum of money to erect a school house, shall be granted until the petitioners shall have submitted a plan and specifications of the building intended to be erected; to be approved by the Council, or one of its officers; and that as a farther condition, the petitioners shall be required to erect upon the grounds belonging to the said School House, at least one suitable water closet for the use of the school. The interests of the public, in my opinion, would be still farther served if such Trustees as are about to erect new school Houses should, in all cases, be required to offer the same to competition by public advertisement; giving the contract to such persons as should offer to erect the same according to plan and specifications for the smallest amount, and giving satisfactory security for the completion of their engagements.

Trustees, in some instances, I have been informed, have suffered a good deal of inconvenience from the delay which, generally, attends the collection of the rates granted for the above purpose; and not unfrequently they are obliged to pay higher prices than would be required if the money were immediately available. To obviate these difficulties I beg leave to submit for the consideration of the Council a plan which has been adopted

† See note B.—Appendix.

by some other Districts, and so far as I know, has given general satisfaction. It is as follows : When a Bye Law has passed the Council authorising an assessment for the erection or repair of any school House, the Warden is authorised to sign draughts on the Treasurer for the amount, in favor of the contractor, or the Trustees, as it may be required for carrying on the work ; the same amount when collected, to be paid again into the Treasury.

By this means the public works, of the nature specified, are facilitated without loss to any department of the public interest. I have no doubt but the adoption of such a rule would give great satisfaction to parties concerned.

SCHOOL FUND FOR 1847.

The School Fund for 1847 had been apportioned by my Predecessor and the greater part of the Government Grant had been paid to the Teachers before I came into the office. Notice had been given to all the Trustees, by the late Superintendent, that the proportion of the Fund derived from the Municipal assessment would be payable to Teachers within the month of January. Though comparatively but little money had been paid into my hands on the first of January, I commenced paying all the orders that were presented, which I continued to do until March, at which time it became necessary for me to despatch my report for the year and place my accounts in the hands of the District Auditors. Even at that late date, more than two months after the District taxes were due according to law, several of the Collectors were defaulters to such an extent that I found myself in advance to the amount of £12 5s. 3d., notwithstanding a very considerable number of the school sections had not drawn at all.

The Township Collectors who were defaulters on the sixth of March, 1848, together with the amounts of their several defalcations were as follows :—

The Collector for the Township of	BLENHEIM	- - -	£44	19	5½
" do.	do.	BURFORD	- - -	88	13 10½
" do.	do.	BLANDFORD	- - -	38	17 2
" do.	do.	NORWICH	- - -	11	2 7

£183 15 14

Leaving on the sixth of March the large sum of £183 15 14.

Of this amount the following sums have, since that date, been paid into my hands :—

Collector for Norwich, in full,	- - - - -	£11	2	7
do. " Blenheim, on account,	- - - - -	23	10	0

£34 12 7

Leaving a balance still due to the school Fund, from the Townships of Burford, Blenheim, and Blandford, of £147 2s. 6½d.

Great inconvenience and loss, to several parties, have been the result of this unhappy state of things. As was observed above, a very considerable number of school sections had not drawn for their apportionment on the first of March, when the money in hand was more than exhausted.

A few of them, it is true, had not entitled themselves to do so, from not having complied with the requirements of the Statute. But the majority had delayed sending up their orders from misapprehension only, thinking that the money would be payable at any future time.

Upon representing the case of such to the Superintendent of schools, I was immediately authorised by that officer to satisfy all such claims, where it should appear that the parties presenting them had been guilty of no censurable neglect; and I have been extremely anxious to do so, but up to this time the means have not been at my disposal. The consequence is that either the Trustees, who had advanced the amount to the Teachers, or else the Teachers themselves, are deprived of the use of the money which is justly their due for nearly three quarters of the year.

It will be proper for me to observe that, in accordance with what I supposed to be my duty, I gave notice of these defalcations, on or about the first of March to W. Lapenotiere, Esq., the Council's Solicitor, requesting him to take the necessary measures for the immediate collection of the same; and doubtless that officer will be able to give a satisfactory reason why he has failed to do so.

Your Honorable Council will see, from the above statement, the necessity of providing against the recurrence of similar evils in future; in order to which I beg to submit for the consideration of the Council, the following provisions:

First, that all Collectors who shall not have collected and paid over, the several amounts to be collected by them for the support of schools on or before the third Tuesday in December, forfeit all their per centage in respect to the same. Secondly; That the Clerk of the Council be required, on the first of January in each year, to give notice to the proper Township Clerks of the defalcations, if any, of the Collectors in their Townships respectively, in order that the same persons may not be elected to fill that office again; and Thirdly, That the Council's Solicitor be instructed to commence legal proceedings, on or immediately after the first day of January in each year against all Collectors and their sureties, who may then be in arrears to the School Fund, for the collection of the same; And lastly, That the Superintendent be authorised to draw on the District Treasurer for any amount necessary to make good the School Fund, to be replaced to the Treasury when received from the Collectors.

With respect to the amount now due to the School Fund for 1847, I beg especially to recommend, and entreat, that the Council advance the same from the general funds of the District, to meet the pressing wants of the parties concerned.

PARLIAMENTARY GRANT FOR 1848.

On the 7th July I received the letter of the Superintendent of schools, dated the fourth of the same month, apprising me of the amount of the Parliamentary Grant in aid of Common Schools apportioned to this District, which was seven hundred and three pounds five shillings. I immediately proceeded, as the law directs, to apportion the District school fund to the school sections entitled to an apportionment of the same, and in giving the notices required by Statute, to the Trustees of the several sections

of the amount apportioned to their sections respectively, I informed them that the apportionment of the Government Grant would be payable on, and after the seventh of August. I felt myself quite safe in fixing upon that date because it is provided by the Statute 9 Victoria Cap. 20 Section 29, "That the sum of money annually to be distributed for the encouragement of Common Schools in Upper Canada, shall be payable on the first day of August in each year by warrants to the Superintendents of Common Schools of the several Districts in Upper Canada aforesaid."

Having duly appointed an agent in Montreal to receive the same and pay it to my credit into the Gore Bank, I could not foresee that any delay was likely to occur. However, as the specified time approached, and as I received no intelligence from Montreal; being most unwilling to cause disappointment to any Teacher, I anxiously sought for such means as would enable me to prevent it, and was so fortunate as to conclude an arrangement with the Gore Bank for the advance of £200 pending any delay that might take place. This sum was exhausted within the first two weeks, within which time the agents of the Bank received information that the School Fund would be paid in Government debentures, upon which they declined any further accommodation.

From this unfortunate decision other delays and annoyances arose. Fresh papers had to be transmitted to Montreal, and as the Banks refused to take the agency, no way remained to get the debentures sent up, unless I would assume the risk and expense of transmission by mail. To this I consented; and after a delay of more than six weeks, and a journey to Hamilton, the debentures were at length put into my hands on the nineteenth of September instead of the first of August.

Another difficulty now presented itself. These debentures were not current even in Hamilton, a ware-housing port, where the facilities for exchanging them were vastly more numerous than they could be at any point further west. In this remote District the depreciation must, of course, be proportionably greater; and to several of the Teachers in the remote parts of our new Townships they would have been almost entirely worthless. Besides, they were all comprised in five pound notes, with the exception of a single note of the denomination of ten dollars, and fifteen shillings in Bank bills; making it utterly impossible to pay, in such a currency, the ever varying amounts due to the multitude of Teachers. Taking all these matters into account, after the most mature and anxious deliberation, I came to the conclusion that I should be acting right to sell the debentures to the best advantage, and then throw myself upon the generosity of your Honorable Council to indemnify me for the loss.

I accordingly disposed of them in the following manner:

Two hundred pounds to the Gore Bank in return for the same amount advanced, at one pound ten per cent.,	£3	0	0
Five hundred and two pounds to Mr. Kerr, Merchant, of Hamilton, at two pounds per cent	10	1	0
	<hr/>		
	£13	1	0

Making a total loss of thirteen pounds and one shilling.

To this is to be added postage on the debentures and other documents relating to the same business, sixteen shillings; and expenses of a journey

to Hamilton, one pound. Making in all fourteen pounds and seventeen shillings.

Having thus, with some loss to the District, changed these debentures into money, another question arose for consideration; viz. Whether the loss which had been sustained by the School Fund as above explained, should be deducted from the amounts to be paid to the several Teachers, or whether to assume the entire responsibility myself, trusting to the District Council alone for indemnification. Among the reasons which finally induced me to decide on the latter course, I beg to mention the following :

1st.—It seemed to me exceedingly unjust and cruel that a deficiency in a public fund in which the whole District has almost an equal interest, should be required to be made up by one class, which, in comparison to the rest, is neither numerous nor wealthy. Indeed school Teachers, as a general rule, are the least able, of any portion of the community, to suffer such a loss. A large number of them if not a majority of the whole, receive no money for their services whatever, besides what they receive from this source. Such must feel the loss, even of a few shillings very severely.

And 2d., I could not bring myself to believe that I was legally authorised to make any such demand upon the Teachers. The Act 9 Victoria Cap. 20, Sec. 13 requires the District Superintendent, "As soon as he shall receive from the District Clerk a notification of the amount of money required by the District Council, to be raised by tax, to add that amount to the Government Apportionment, and apportion the said fund among the several School sections entitled to receive the same." But neither the act above recited nor any other, makes provisions for any deduction from these apportionments when once they are made and declared. I have therefore considered that the only right course was to pay in full, all the orders presented, which I have done accordingly. About thirty Teachers remain to be paid, all of whom are expected to apply during the present month, and I trust the Council will supply me with the means of liquidating all their just claims.

SCHOOL BOOKS.

I am strongly impressed with the opinion that it is in the power of Your Honorable Council to confer a very important benefit upon our Schools at comparatively a trifling cost, in the matter of supplying uniform text Books. An almost endless variety in the books intended for the same classes of pupils, at present exists in very many of our Schools. That this state of things interferes materially with their efficiency, it will not require a word to prove. It is not uncommon to find a dozen pupils, nearly of the same age and just about equal in their attainments, arranged in three or four classes instead of one. The only reason for this unnatural and inconvenient arrangement is, that they happen to be furnished by their parents with so many different sorts of books. Almost no more time is required for the reading or recitation exercises of a class of ten or twelve members than for one of half or one fourth that number. Hence the time of the school is actually lost in nearly the same proportion as the varieties of text books are multiplied: besides rendering the instruction

given, less thorough and efficient ; insomuch that I think I hazard nothing in saying that many of our teachers might with greater ease and pleasure to themselves, accomplish a given result in one half the time they are obliged to bestow upon it under the circumstances. As a matter of economy, the supplying a school with a variety of text books, may be justly compared with a farmer who should employ two plowmen and furnish them with but one plow, or two mowers to divide the use of one scythe between them. In such a case of course, while one was engaged at work, the other must stand idly by.

It may be supposed that an evil so obvious would find its remedy in the good sense of the people. And I admit that in time such would doubtless be the case. But I fear that without the action of the Council, that time would be long. Many of the people, I am sorry to say, appear strangely careless about the whole matter of education ; and others who discover a more just concern on the subject, seem to think they have discharged their duty when they have furnished their children with books of such kinds as happened to fall in their way, and sent them to school. And there is still another difficulty. Of the very books which have been approved by the Board of Education and by Your Honourable Council, different editions have been published in this Country, or imported from abroad, which are by no means uniform, and cannot therefore be mixed up in the same schools without subjecting them to the same evils before enumerated.

I beg therefore most respectfully, to recommend that Your Honourable Council appropriate the sum of one hundred pounds for the purchase of Text Books for the use of the schools in this District, and provide by Bye-Law that the same shall be sold to Trustees, who will undertake to supply their respective schools, at fifty per cent. below cost, and to all others at thirty-three and one-third per cent.

The following among other advantages, would result from such an appropriation :

1st.—The books would be procured on wholesale terms, or for a deduction of about one third ; say thirty per cent : or one hundred and thirty pounds worth of Books would be procured for one hundred pounds. This increase in the sum total of stock, added to the deduction of fifty per cent, would be sufficient, I imagine, to induce nearly all the Schools to seek for a supply in this manner, which would secure the object proposed ; and when the books were all disposed of, there would be at least fifty pounds on hand, which might be either returned to the Treasury or further appropriated for the same purpose as might seem fit to the Council : For I beg to have it distinctly understood that I consider such an appropriation necessary, only as a temporary expedient. When the schools are once uniformly supplied, and the Store-keepers and Country dealers shall learn that only one given class of school Books are marketable in the District, the entire difficulty will be obviated and all danger of returning again, to the same state of things will be removed.

SCHOOL SECTIONS.

Many applications are made to Your Honourable Council at nearly all its sittings, for the division, creation or alteration of School Sections. I

beg therefore, to take this opportunity to repeat an opinion before expressed to the Council, that as a general rule, no School Section should be divided, or reduced in extent, unless the strongest reasons are shown in favor of such a division. No one circumstance, in my opinion, interferes so materially with the prosperity of our schools, or acts so injuriously upon them, as the smallness and consequent poverty of the sections. It is mostly owing to this that nearly half the Schools in the District were vacant during a part or the whole of the last summer ; and that more than half of those in operation are of the lowest or third rate character. The people having but scanty means at their disposal, yield to the temptation to let their schools remain closed for half of each year, or employ a teacher of low qualifications at a small salary, or perhaps both ; for there are many School Sections in which only six months' teaching is aimed at, and that in some instances, by a very inferior Teacher. Now let us suppose any two of the latter kind united into one. Then a teacher might be employed for the whole year without any additional expense, and if the school should be kept for six months alternately in each of the school houses, all the children, even the very youngest, would enjoy all the advantages they now do, while some of them at least, would have twelve months tuition placed within their reach.

I beg to submit, whether it would not be an object worthy the attention of the Council to enquire into the propriety and practicability, of effecting an entire revision of the school sections, in order at least, that they might be properly described and numbered and their real dimensions and limits understood. At present a great deal of confusion exists on this subject. As an instance, I may mention that in Nissouri there are three sections or parts of sections, known or intended to be known, as No. 1—Two as No. 2—Two as No. 3—Two as No. 6, and two as No. 7,—Besides there is a great number of sections of the extent and limits of which I have no description.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

On the whole, though I have felt it my duty to animadvert on many existing evils which ought to be promptly met and, if possible removed, I have nevertheless good grounds to justify me in offering my congratulations to the Council and to the public, upon the evident improvements that have taken place, and that are now in progress in connection with the Educational interests of the District. The effect of our present school system (though in several respects imperfect) has doubtless been to double the number of schools, while the pupils in attendance, and the amount of instruction given have been augmented in a much greater proportion. An increasing disposition is manifested on the part of the people to employ a higher class of Teachers, and to give them reasonable salaries ; and by means of the Provincial Normal School, such Teachers are being multiplied ; and shortly, it is reasonable to expect, the influence and value of right instruction on right principles, will be extensively perceived throughout the Country.

At the approaching session of the Provincial Legislature, I believe it is expected that some amendments will be made to the school act, and it

might not be improper for Your Honorable Council, by resolution or memorial, to give an exposition of the views and wishes of the people of this District on a subject in which they have so deep an interest. Having taken much pains to ascertain what the views of the people are, on the subject, I venture to assert that the school law is not unpopular; but on the contrary, the people almost unanimously regard it as the greatest boon ever bestowed by the Legislature upon the people of this Country. They are however equally unanimous in the opinion that it is susceptible of several improvements, and that some amendments are absolutely necessary. I trust Your Honorable Council will not think me exceeding the duties of the office with which I have the honor to be entrusted by your suffrages, if I proceed to point out briefly, some of the required amendments which the almost unanimous voice of public opinion seems most loudly to call for.

The part of the act which most loudly calls for amendment, is that which provides for raising a part of the Teachers salary by a rate bill. I do not recollect of having met with so much as one intelligent Trustee in the District, who, if he expressed an opinion at all, did not condemn the present system and pronounce it unsuited to the wants of the Country. On this subject I think I hazard nothing in asserting, that all who are capable of forming an opinion are unanimous. With respect to what ought to be substituted in place of the present rate bill, the opinions appear to be somewhat divided. Some would prefer a uniform rate bill upon all the children residing in the school sections, (reserving the power of the Trustees to excuse any for good reasons) whether in attendance or not. Others, (and I believe they include among them our most enlightened and virtuous citizens) hold that the property of the Country ought to be held for the education of all, no less than for the protection of all.

My own opinion is that an amendment of that part of the act based upon either of these principles would be a most valuable improvement of the present system.

Another amendment that seems to be called for, regards the powers which ought to be entrusted to the boards of Trustees. These ought to be considerably extended. They should be empowered, by law, to decide in all cases, whether it were necessary to levy an assessment upon their own school sections respectively, and to what amount; whether for building or repairing school houses, for purchasing books and apparatus, or for paying Teachers. They ought also to be fully authorised to carry out all their own resolutions without any reference to the District Council for a special bye-law. Of course, the exercise of these powers should be regulated by certain general principles to be defined by the District Council, who on behalf of the public should see to it, that all monies coming into the hands of Trustees for school purposes should be properly applied and duly accounted for.

Lastly I beg to submit to the Council whether it would not be desirable to provide for the more equitable distribution of the school fund. At present each section receives an amount in proportion to the number of children residing within its bounds, whether those children attend the school or not, and also without reference to the length of time the school is kept open. So that two school sections in which the number of chil-

dren is equal the amount they will receive from the school fund will be equal, though in one, all the children may attend the school the year round, and in the other, only one half or one third may attend for six months only. A juster principle, it seems to me would be one which should offer aid to parties from the public fund, in proportion to the amount of local effort put forth by themselves, giving encouragement to children who actually attend the school, and withholding it from all who do not.

I have only to add, that in pursuance of a resolution of the Council, passed at its last session, I have the honor herewith to submit a form for a School Register, and beg respectfully to recommend to the Council to procure a sufficient number to be prepared for supplying the Schools, by the beginning of the year, and furnish each board of Trustees, either gratuitously or at half cost price. The form is contained in the accompanying document marked B.

All which is respectfully submitted.

W. H. LANDON,
Supt. Schools, Brock Dist.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—Atmospheric air is composed of two Gases, Nitrogen and Oxygen, in the proportion of eighty parts of the former to twenty of the latter. It is the Oxygen of the atmosphere only, which supports respiration, which fact is ascertained by analysis of the air expelled from the lungs after an inspiration. In every case it is found that such air has parted with a portion of its Oxygen, while it contains exactly the same quantity of Nitrogen it originally possessed. It has also been ascertained that pure Nitrogen cannot support animal life, even for a moment; and vegetables, likewise, immediately wither and die if surrounded by it. The quantity of Oxygen thus abstracted from the air by an adult person in breathing, is about equal to twenty-one cubic inches every minute. But from the proportion stated above, it is seen that two hundred cubic inches of pure atmospheric air, (the quantity mentioned in the text as being required for each person per minute) contain forty cubic inches of Oxygen. It must be remembered, however, that the air cannot support life until the whole of its oxygen is extracted. On the contrary as soon as it is reduced much below twenty per cent., unpleasant consequences begin to be observed. But we now see that the proportion of oxygen in two hundred cubic inches of air, is reduced by one minute's breathing from twenty to less than ten per cent., a proportion which can by no means be considered healthy or safe.

But this is only one view of the case. There are several other operations constantly going forward by which the air in a close room is corrupted. Within the same time that the lungs absorb twenty cubic inches of Oxygen, they throw off nearly the same quantity of carbonic acid gas.

This gas is extremely pernicious to life. When pure, it cannot be drawn into the lungs; an attempt to do so produces a convulsive spasm in the glottis, which prevents any portion from passing. When mixed with common air in the proportion of one to five, or twenty per cent, a candle is almost instantly extinguished by it, and an animal breathing it dies in a few minutes.

But we have seen above, that a person breathing in two hundred cubic inches of air for only one minute, not only reduces the proportion of its oxygen from twenty to ten per cent, but also impregnates it with ten per cent of carbonic acid gas.

Add to this the impure exhalations from the pores of the skin, thrown off by insensible perspiration, which is said to amount to more in quantity than all the other evacuations put together, and it will appear that the case in the text is much understated, and each individual will be found to consume nearer four hundred cubic inches of air a minute than two hundred.

The principle here discussed has a terrible illustration in one night's history of the Black Hole, a prison in Calcutta eighteen feet square. Upon the capture of Fort William by the Nabob of Bengal in 1756, one hundred and forty-six English prisoners were thrust into this prison about seven o'clock in the evening. The first symptom felt by these unfortunate men immediately on shutting the doors was a profuse perspiration. Next their thirst became intolerable, and their breathing difficult. There were two small windows, both on the same side of the room. To these all attempted to rush, and in the desperate struggle many were trampled to death. Without longer dwelling on the horrible details, suffice it to say, that when the doors were opened at six in the morning, only twenty-three of the one hundred and forty-six were alive, and every one of them was prostrate with a putrid fever.

Now let us compare these facts with the principles we have laid down. The Black Hole contained above ten million of cubic inches or sixty-nine thousand to the man, nearly. Yet almost instantly they felt the most unpleasant effects; in an hour their sufferings were intolerable, and in less than three hours several were dead.

"This terrible example," says Dr. Combe, "ought not to be lost upon us, for if results so appalling arise from the extreme corruption of the air, results less obvious and sudden, but no less certain, may be expected from every lesser degree of impurity."

NOTE B.—In this note I shall mention a few particulars (omitted in the text) that should always be considered by parties who are about to erect a School House.

1st. Location : This should be as nearly central as may be, consistently with other more important considerations. The site should by all means be healthy, cheerful, and retired from the noise and dust of a public thoroughfare. There should be ground enough, belonging to the School, to afford ample room for the healthful exercise of the children, and for water closets and woodshed.

2d. Size : Most School-houses are too small. Room ought to be provided, not only for seating, without crowding, the largest number of scholars ever likely to attend, but also for the Teacher's Desk and platform, a moveable Blackboard, and a large space for reading and recitation classes.

I also beg to submit it to my fellow countrymen, whether the most valuable purposes would not be served by adding two separate lobbies or entries, one for boys and one for girls; with shelves, pegs, and above all, a sink, wash-basin, towel, combs and brushes? These conveniences, in addition to those mentioned in the text, appear to me to be very desirable, if not indispensably necessary. If there should be added one or two class rooms, the advantages would undoubtedly overbalance the expense.

3rd. Seats and Desks : In the construction and arrangement of the Seats and Desks, due regard should be had to the health, convenience, and comfort of those who are to occupy them. They should be made for children, and not for grown persons; varying in height according to the varying age and stature of those who are to occupy them. The height of the seats should vary from eight or nine, to fourteen or fifteen inches; and the desks from one foot eight

inches to two feet five or six inches. Every seat should be furnished with a back of a proper height, and sloping backwards, that the children may not be compelled to assume awkward or unhealthy positions of limbs, chest or spine.

They should be easy of access, so that every scholar can go to or from his seat, and the Teacher approach any scholar without disturbing any other than the one concerned. [In short they should be so arranged as to encourage habits of attention; remove all temptation to violate the rules of good order on the part of any scholar, and admit of the constant and complete supervision of the whole school by the Teacher.] In order to this, not more than two scholars should sit at one desk, which should be four feet long and eighteen inches wide; fifteen inches of which should incline forward so that the front edge may be four inches lower than the other.

The seat should be so proportioned to the height of the desk and placed at such a distance from it, that the pupil will not be required to lean forward to reach it, nor raise his arm, nor elevate his shoulder blade, nor bend his neck to the left, nor in short assume any other position than the most natural and easy one, when writing or ciphering upon it.

The desks should be arranged in rows, with passages of about eighteen inches in width between each two rows and between the two outside rows and the walls. Care should be taken in planning the windows so that the light may fall upon the desks to the best advantage.

4th. Construction: School houses should be constructed in the best and most substantial manner. The additional expense will be more than refunded, in a few years, by the saving in repairs alone. Besides, a building so constructed will outlast three or four erected in the frail loose manner, too frequently adopted. If a frame building, it should stand upon a good stone foundation of mason work. The eaves should project at least eighteen inches over the sides, unless there are conductors to carry off the water. The studding should not be more than eighteen inches apart from centre to centre, nor the joisting more than twenty-one.

I shall conclude this note by laying before my readers the opinions of two eminent American physicians in respect to the dangers to which we expose the health and physical well-being of our children by the manner in which we furnish our School houses. They are taken from Barnard's *School Architecture*, a book which I wish were more common in this country.

Dr. J. V. C. Smith, of Boston, in his *Anatomical Class Book*, says:—"There is a radical defect in the seats of our school rooms. Malformation of the bones, narrow chests, coughs ending in consumption and death in mid-life, besides a multitude of minor ills have had their origin in the school rooms." Again,—*"To these wretched articles"* (badly constructed seats and desks) *"are we to look in some measure for the cause of so many distortions of the bones, spinal diseases and chronic affection so prevalent throughout the country."*

Dr. Warren in his admirable Lecture before the American Institute of Instruction in 1830, says:—"In the course of my observations I have been able to satisfy myself that about one half the young females brought up as they are at present, undergo some visible and obvious change of structure, and not a few, entirely lose their health." And among the causes which tend to such mournful results he enumerates "the unnatural elevation of the right shoulder, the habit of bending the neck, and the stooping posture of the body when engaged in writing and other similar exercises at school."

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